

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled).

2. (Original) A link chain, comprising:

a plurality of pairs of neighboring composite links, the links of each pair being pivotable relative to each other and each link including a stack of plates; and

a plurality of coupling units, one for each pair of links and each pivotably connecting the respective pair of links, each of said units including at least two adjacent coupling elements and at least some of said plates having windows for the respective coupling elements, at least some of said coupling elements being rockable about axes normal to the respective plates and having rounded external surfaces contacting rounded internal surfaces of the respective plates in said windows thereof, said rounded surfaces having radii of curvature and the ratio of the radii of curvature of said internal surfaces to the radii of curvature of said external surfaces being less than ten.

3. (Original) The link chain of claim 2, wherein said ratio is less than five.

4. (Original) The link chain of claim 2, wherein said ratio at least approximates two.

Claims 5-8: (Cancelled)

9. (Original) A link chain, comprising:

a plurality of pairs of chain links each including a stack of elongated plates; and

means for pivotably coupling the links of said pairs to each other, the plates of at least one of said links exhibiting a plurality of first characteristics including first lengths and first pitches p_1 and the plates of at least one other link exhibiting a plurality of second characteristics including second lengths and second pitches p_2 , at least one of said first characteristics being different from at least one of said second characteristics, the chain links of at least one of said pairs being pivotable relative to each other through a first maximum angle $\alpha_{\max 1}$, the chain links of at least one other of said pairs being pivotable relative to each other through a different second maximum angle $\alpha_{\max 2}$, and the ratio of said angles and said pitches satisfying the equation

$$\alpha_{\max 2} \geq p_2/p_1 \times \alpha_{\max 1}.$$

Claims 10-13: (Cancelled)

14. (New) A link chain, comprising:

a plurality of pairs of neighboring composite links, the links of each pair being pivotable relative to each other and each link including a stack of plates; and

a plurality of coupling units, one for each pair of links and each pivotably connecting the respective pair of links, each of said units including at least two adjacent coupling elements and at least some of said plates having windows for the respective coupling elements, at least some of said coupling elements being rockable about axes normal to the respective plates and having rounded external surfaces contacting rounded internal surfaces of the respective plates in said windows thereof, said rounded surfaces having radii of curvature and the ratio of the radii of curvature of said internal surfaces to the radii of curvature of said external surfaces being less than

ten, and wherein the radii of curvature of one of said internal surfaces and said external surfaces is variable since it gradually changes over the length of the surface.

15. (New) A link chain, comprising:

a plurality of pairs of neighboring composite links, the links of each pair being pivotable relative to each other and each link including a stack of plates; and

a plurality of coupling units, one for each pair of links and each pivotably connecting the respective pair of links, each of said units including at least two adjacent coupling elements and at least some of said plates having elongated windows with end sections for the respective coupling elements, with an intermediate section therebetween, wherein the windows are shaped to prevent displacement of the coupling units from the respective end sections into the intermediate section, at least some of said coupling elements being rockable about axes normal to the respective plates and having rounded external surfaces contacting rounded internal surfaces of the respective plates in said windows thereof, said rounded surfaces having radii of curvature and the ratio of the radii of curvature of said internal surfaces to the radii of curvature of said external surfaces being less than ten.

16. (New) The link chain of claim 15, wherein the plate includes projections that extend into a respective elongate window and define the end sections and in part define the radius of curvature of the rounded internal surface.